

REMARKS

An excess claim fee payment letter is submitted herewith for four (4) additional total claims.

Claims 1- 21 and 23-30 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claim 19 is amended to more clearly define the invention and claims 26-30 are added. Claims 1, 14, and 19 are independent.

Support for new claims 26 - 29 is found in the specification at, for example, page 13, line 14 - page 14, line 8.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicant also notes that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that claims 1-18 and 23-24 are allowed. However, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims are allowable.

Claims 19, 21, and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by The Norio reference. Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Norio reference in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art.

These rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

An exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention, as defined by independent claim 19, is directed to a pellicle frame between a reticle and a pellicle film. The pellicle frame

includes a first portion directly contacting the pellicle film, an adhesive film contacting the pellicle film, and a second portion contacting the first portion and the adhesive film. The first portion contacts the reticle.

It has been very difficult to ensure that the pellicle film in conventional pellicle frames are parallel to the surface of the reticle because these conventional frames are attached to the pellicle film and the reticle using adhesives. Thus, the distance between the pellicle film and the reticle is not only a factor of the height of the pellicle frame, but also the height of the adhesives. These adhesives exhibit a degree of elasticity which causes the height of the adhesive to vary with the amount of pressure. If the pressure varies across the surface of the pellicle frame, then the height of the adhesive varies and the pellicle film cannot be made parallel to the reticle.

In stark contrast, the pellicle frame of the present invention includes a first portion that directly contacts the pellicle film and also directly contacts the reticle. In this manner, through the direct contact of the first portion with the pellicle film and the direct contract of the first portion with the reticle, the pellicle film is accurately positioned parallel to the reticle.

II. THE 35 U.S.C. § 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH REJECTION

The Examiner alleges that claim 20 is indefinite. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Examiner alleges that claim 20 is indefinite because "It is unclear how the first portion can contact both the pellicle film and the reticle."

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 20 is sufficiently definite "in light of: (A)

The content of the particular application disclosure.” (M.P.E.P. § 2173.02)

In particular, Figures 3 and 4 and the accompanying description in the specification at, for example, page 13, lines 24 - 32, make it very clear “how the first portion can contact both the pellicle film and the reticle.”

Figure 3 clearly illustrates an exemplary embodiment where the first portion 92 contacts both the pellicle film 12 and the reticle 14.

Therefore, contrary to the Examiner’s allegation claim 20 is not indefinite for being “unclear how the first portion can contact both the pellicle film and the reticle” as alleged by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

III. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

Regarding claims 19, 21, and 25, the Examiner alleges that the Norio reference teaches the claimed invention and regarding the rejection of claim 20, the Examiner alleges that the Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art would have been combined with the Norio reference to provide the claimed invention. Applicant submits, however, that there are elements of the claimed invention which are neither taught nor suggested by the Norio reference and the Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of independent claim 19 including a first portion that directly contacts the pellicle film and also directly contacts the reticle. As explained above, this feature is important for ensuring that the pellicle film is accurately positioned parallel to the reticle.

Rather, and in stark contrast, the Norio reference does not teach or suggest anything at

all regarding the interface between the pellicle frame and the reticle. Indeed, the Norio reference does not mention any reticle at all.

Clearly, Applicant's Admitted Prior Art does not remedy this deficiency of the Norio reference.

Rather, as is very clearly illustrated by Figure 1 of the present application, Applicant's Admitted Prior Art discloses that the pellicle frame does not contact the reticle at all, let alone a pellicle frame that includes a first portion that directly contacts the pellicle film and also directly contacts the reticle as recited by independent claim 19.

To the contrary, Applicant's Admitted Prior Art discloses providing an adhesive layer 22 between the pellicle frame 10 and the reticle 14.

Further, as explained above, Applicant's Admitted Prior Art suffers from exactly the same problem that the invention recited by independent claim 19 solves. In particular, the distance between the pellicle film 12 and the reticle 14 is not only a factor of the height of the pellicle frame 10, but also the height of the adhesive layers 20 and 22. These adhesive layers 20 and 22 exhibit a degree of elasticity which causes the height of the adhesive layers 20 and 22 to vary with the amount of pressure. If the pressure varies across the surface of the pellicle frame 10, then the height of the adhesive layers 20 and 22 vary and the pellicle film 12 cannot be made parallel to the reticle 14.

Clearly, none of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of independent claim 19 including a first portion that directly contacts the pellicle film and also directly contacts the reticle.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claims 19-21 and 25.

IV. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

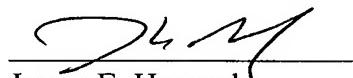
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-21 and 23-30, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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